

APR 4 1973

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March 30, 1973

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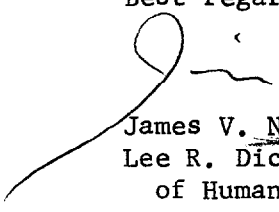
Dear Josh:

Stimulated by our recent conversation in California and by yours of March 12, I have during this past week made the best effort I can to recall (and still be honest) the contacts between Columbia and the "new genetics" at the Rockefeller Institute during my tenure as a NRC Fellow at Columbia in 1941-42. The two things that I am really sure of is that a) I do not have photographic recall and b) in retrospect I didn't keep the right notes on the right things that happened.

I am quite sure that sometime during that fellowship, probably in 1942 rather than 1941, I made either one or two trips to the Rockefeller Institute, probably in the company of Dobzhansky, in the course of which I met Landsteiner and Avery. I am inclined to believe it was one trip, and that visit to Landsteiner was planned, since I was then a budding human geneticist and this was after all the man who had discovered human blood groups. I have a clear mental picture of meeting Avery, probably because his unprepossessing appearance simply didn't fit in with my mental image of those intellectual giants at the Institute. I don't know whether we planned the visit to Avery's lab or it was a kind of incidental development during the day. I do have the impression that Dobzhansky, if that indeed was the person who had me in tow, was well aware of Avery's findings, and that there was some chit-chat about how strange they were.

Should you be interested in attempting to pin this exchange down even more, I would urge you to write both to Dunn and Dobzhansky. It seems possible that given the above account, one or the other could fill in the necessary details. More than that, their memories right now are probably better than mine!

Best regards,



James V. Neel, M.D.
Lee R. Dice University Professor
of Human Genetics

JVN:rj